



INDIANA COMMISSION ON HISPANIC/LATINO AFFAIRS
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204-2797
JENNY SARABIA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Hispanic/Latino Affairs Commission Holds First Meeting

Indianapolis, Ind. -- Hispanic leaders from around the state recently attended the inaugural meeting of Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs, which was held in Indianapolis on January 22, 2004.

Created by statute in the 2003 general assembly, the Hispanic/Latino Affairs Commission will address numerous issues that affect the Latino population and it is determined to promote self-empowerment. Jenny Sarabia, who was appointed by Gov. Joe Kernan in November of 2003, serves as the commission's executive director.

Sarabia led the meeting and provided a brief review of the Commission's duties as determined by Indiana Code §4-23-28. The code dictates the number of Commissioners and the selection thereof. The following are the Commission's board members:

Governor Kernan's appointee:

Mr. Ronnie Cantu, Evansville

Indiana 2004 General Assembly members:

- Senator Vi Simpson
- Senator Tom Wyss
- Rep. John Aguilera
- Rep. Richard McClain

House & Senate appointed laymembers:

- Mrs. Mara Candelaria Reardon, Munster
- Ms. Myrna Maldonado, East Chicago
- Mr. Gregorio Chavez, South Bend
- Mr. Dan Gavito, Merrillville
- Dr. Mary Iiu Altman, Lafayette
- Ms. Juana Watson, Columbus
- Mr. Manuel Gonzalez, Carmel
- Mr. Salvador Soto, Fort Wayne

Government Agency Appointments:

- Mrs. Claudia Fuentes, the Indiana Department of Commerce,
- Commissioner Ridley-Turner, the Indiana Department of Corrections
- Ms. Carmen Quintana, the Indiana State Department of Health
- Mrs. Karen Martinez, the Indiana Department of Education
- Secretary Cheryl Sullivan, the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
- Executive Director Mrs. Sandra Leek, the Indiana Civil Rights Commission
- Commissioner Alan Degner, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development

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During the meeting, the Commission elected State Representative John Aguilera to chair the organization and Salvador Soto to serve as Vice Chair. Carmen Quintana is designated to serve as the Commission's secretary.

Various sub-committees were established such as the Budget and Fundraising subcommittee where Claudia Ontiveros Fuentes, the Tax Incentives Manager for the Indiana Department of Commerce will serve as the subcommittee leader. "I am very excited to be part of the Commission now that it has been designated as an executive entity. Our proposals, projects and ongoing activities will no longer be held back by designated time periods. Since the Commission is now a permanent entity of the State of Indiana, we can move forward with long term goals," said Fuentes.

"The work of the Commission is critical in this State, especially when we consider the great educational need of Latinos in the State of Indiana. Ivy Tech is more than happy and proud to be a partner in this endeavor," added J. Guadalupe Valtierra, Chancellor of Ivy Tech in Gary Indiana.

Martha Carvajal, Hispanic Outreach Liaison for U.S. Senator Evan Bayh attended the meeting and commented, "This Commission will address issues affecting Indiana's entire Hispanic community, such as housing, economic development, education and healthcare, at a statewide level. I look forward to working with Ms. Sarabia and the other members of the Hispanic Commission to advance these issues and continue Senator Bayh's work on behalf of all Hoosiers."

For more information on the commission or its activities contact Jenny Sarabia at 317/ 233-5048.

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